



Fellow State Team Members,

Even during these unprecedented times, the role and responsibility of state government persists. You live it every day. You have been hard at work establishing a new normal for how we work together. You continue to provide essential services and frontline care across the state.

After nearly a decade of state service - first as a legislator and now as a member of Missouri's great Medicaid team - I have been impressed every day by how you and colleagues in all 16 departments have stepped up to fight COVID-19 and keep our government running.

I want to share a quick update on the COVID-19 situation across the state and, equally important, how all your departments are working together to help Missouri meet and beat this challenge.

Governor Parson has asked a cross-department group of team members to find the best way for the state government to help slow the growth of COVID-19 in Missouri and put the state on the path to a "Show Me Strong" recovery.

As Governor Parson has said, we are cautiously optimistic about what the data is telling us about COVID-19 in Missouri. Missouri's early action on social distancing is making a big difference. Early indications show case increases and hospitalizations related to COVID-19 in the state may be slowing. Even St. Louis, which continues to be the epicenter of COVID-19 in Missouri, is showing signs of stabilization. However, we still have work to do.

[Missouri's "Show Me Strong" recovery plan](#) will guide our efforts. This plan is the result of unprecedented collaboration among the Governor's Office, cabinet leaders, and healthcare and business leaders.

Governor Parson has stressed we will use data to inform our decisions of how and when to start reopening Missouri. His plan has 4 pillars — testing capacity, access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), our healthcare system capacity, and identification and containment of potential outbreaks.

Personally, I have been honored to work with leaders from every department to break down barriers and find solutions. Working groups dedicated to the COVID-19 response meet daily (virtually). Their pace is intense.

Their creativity and collaboration inspiring. These teams are getting things done in days that may have taken weeks or months before, such as:

- Establishing an online marketplace where healthcare providers can input the type and amount of PPE they need and then are connected with potential suppliers. This innovative service is available for both state and local entities and for both public and private providers.
- Securing and deploying a Battelle PPE decontamination unit. This device will allow the state to decontaminate up to 80,000 N95 masks per day. N95s are masks used by medical professionals and first responders across Missouri.
- Partnering with Microsoft to create an information platform to give us more accurate COVID-19 testing data for the state. Better data will help us fight COVID-19 better.

Looking forward, we will continue to find innovative ways to serve Missouri citizens. The COVID-19 challenge will not be over in a few weeks; instead, we should expect to manage it for months. We will continue to use data to drive policy. We will collaborate to break down barriers.

All of us are part of this effort. You too can help in the fight by identifying new and better ways to perform our essential functions in the coming months.

But we cannot serve if we do not first care for ourselves. Remember the basics like handwashing and social distancing. They have made a difference. We need to keep them up. To learn more about staying healthy, visit the [Department of Health and Senior Services' website](#).

It is an honor to continue to serve with you.

Sincerely,

Todd Richardson

Director of Missouri HealthNet

P.S. Please take time and read this article from the Jefferson City News Tribune that has information from Dr. Robin Trotman, medical director of infectious diseases at CoxHealth in Springfield. [Missouri doctor: When non-pandemic health care returns, it won't be the same.](#)